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ABSTRACT

This study focused on the relationships between attitude congruence and the selector's decisions about teacher candidates. Selectors rated a teacher applicant as part of a simulated teacher selection situation. Applicants were represented by written information in which the proportion of attitude congruence with the selector and the relevance of the attitudes to the vacancy were varied. The data indicated that the selector's decisions about teacher candidates are influenced by the proportion of congruent attitudes rather than by the relevance of the attitudes to the position vacancy. The implications of the findings for teacher preparation programs and teacher recruitment are discussed. (Author)

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THE EFFECTS OF VARIOUS ATTITUDE CONGRUENCE CONDITIONS ON TEACHER SELECTION DECISIONS *

by

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Introduction

Selecting teaching personnel is one of the most important functions performed by a school administrator. Through this process he secures human resources to maintain or change the educational program. The function has serious economic impact as well, for monies spent for instructional services usually form the greatest part of a school district's budget. We wish to secure maximum teaching service for our investment and not average or below average service.

The importance of this function may also be seen in the research efforts and application of findings by people concerned with the personnel selection process in business, industry, and government. Quality control of the process has long been a matter of concern and research. (Cronbach and Gleser 1965). This concern may be a direct result of the obvious relationship between employee performance and productivity.

Educational administrators in public school districts have only recently received selection process experiences concerned with how to select teachers (Bolton 1971). Their training up to recent years consisted largely of learning about the selection of teachers. Now that the teacher shortage has ended, school personnel officials should be concerned with tighter quality controls in the selection process.

At the present time the selection process in education consists of two major phases. The first phase involves the screening of candidate documents, i.e., application forms, placement records. Once the candidate passes this hurdle he is

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interviewed by the administrator. At some later time a decision regarding hiring the candidate is rendered. The activities engaged in during each of the two phases may vary somewhat from school district to school district but they are essentially similar. This exploratory study is concerned with attitudinal forces that may influence recruiter decisions about his attraction to a candidate, his view of a candidate's qualifications and his decision to hire a candidate.

Theoretical Framework

This study may be conceptualized by using Theodore Newcomb's theory of interpersonal attraction. We are specifically concerned with that aspect of his theory described as the "individual system of orientation." This system may be used to interpret the selection process.

The essential ingredients for this system include: (See Fig. 1)

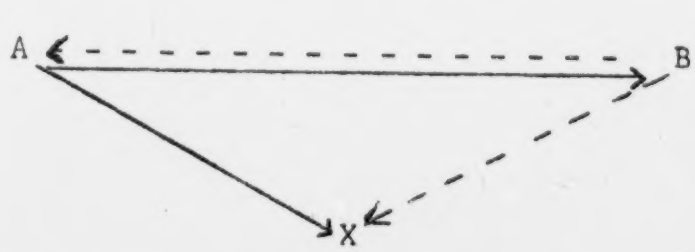

Figure 1: Individual System of Orientation

Arrows point from orienting person or object of orientation. Broken lines refer to orientations attributed by A to B. (p. 9) Newcomb 1961)

1. An individual, A, has an attitude either positive or negative toward some specifiable object, X, that he regards as having common relevance to himself and to another person, B, and that he assumes to have common impact upon both B and himself.
2. An individual, A, attributes an attitude either positive or negative to another person, B, regarding the same object X.
3. An individual, A, has some degree of attraction, positive or negative, toward B.

In Newcomb's system, orientations toward people are called attraction and orientations toward non-person objects are called attitudes.

During the selection process the recruiter (A) usually views documents concerned with the candidate's (B) qualifications for a position. The recruiter, after viewing the documents, may feel some attraction toward the individual. Later, in a personal interview he gains more information about the candidate's qualifications for the position and information about the dandidate's attitudes towards X that may or may not be related to the position. The recruiter at some later point passes judgment on the candidate.

General Hypotheses

Four general research hypotheses for this study were formulated from Newcomb's individual system of orientation. Previous unpublished studies conducted by the researchers were concerned with testing the assumptions of Newcomb's model with attraction between A and B as a dependent variable. The studies were concerned with the selection process and questions were raised about relationships between attraction and actual hiring decisions. Additional questions were raised about the relationship between attraction adn judgments of the candidate's qualifications. Can social attraction, judgments of candidate's qualifications and hiring decisions be treated as a generalized attraction factor?

The research hypothesis derived from these questions is as follows:

H_1 There are relationships among the recruiter's judgments of candidate qualifications, attraction to candidate, and hiring decisions.

The second, third and fourth general hypotheses are concerned with the relationship between the recruiter's judgment of the candidate and the degree of attitude congruence between recruiter and candidate. Newcomb suggests that agreement between A and B on attitudes toward X is rewarding and disagreement is punishing. The congruence or lack of it affects the attraction between A and B.

Therefore, when a high degree of congruence is present it would seem logical

to assume that judgments about a candidate (interpersonal attraction to him, his qualifications or certainty of hiring him) would be favorable. This relationship is expressed below:

H_2 There is a relationship between judgment of candidate qualifications by recruiters and attitude congruency between candidates and recruiters.

H_3 There is a relationship between recruiter attraction to candidates and attitude congruency between candidates and recruiters.

H_4 There is a relationship between hiring certainty of candidates expressed by recruiters and attitude congruency between candidates and recruiters.

Another assumption of Newcomb's model that we were concerned with testing was the notion of topic relevance. The individual system of orientation suggests that the attitudes under consideration must have relevance to both A and B in the selection situation.

Does it make a difference in recruiter judgment if the attitude congruence is based on job relevant or job irrelevant attitudes? This relationship is suggested in sub-hypotheses 2.5, 3.5, and 4.5, which are listed in another section of this paper.

Research Procedures

Sample

The subjects in this study were of eighty-six graduate students enrolled in educational administration courses at Syracuse University. The age range of the participants was from 27 to 46. Most of the subjects were male and possessed master's degrees. They were enrolled for the purpose of completing certification requirements for administrative positions. All subjects participated in the role of a recruiter and were charged with the task of evaluating a candidate represented by written information.

Development of Attitude Congruence-Relevance Conditions

The Education Scale (ES) was used to measure the recruiters attitudes toward

educational practices (Kerlinger and Kaya 1959). Similarity or dissimilarity of attitudes between the recruiter and a hypothetical candidate was constructed by the researchers from recruiter responses to the scales. The bogus attitude information was then presented to the recruiter as a real candidate's response.

The ES is divided into two subscales: progressive and traditional. The ES contains twenty Likert-type items that are scored from -3 to +3 according to the following code: +3 agree very strongly; +2 agree strongly; +1 agree; -1 disagree; -2 disagree strongly; -3 disagree very strongly. The total score reflects favorable or unfavorable attitudes towards progressive education. The scale was not scored but recruiter responses were used to create hypothetical candidates' responses to the scale.

The Worldmindedness Scale (WS) was used to represent the hypothetical candidate's attitudes that might be deemed "job irrelevant". The Education Scale (ES) was concerned with educational practices. The WS was modified to include only attitudes included are oriented towards the international setting (Sampson and Smith 1957).

The modified WS contained twenty Likert-type items that were treated in the same manner as the ES. They were not scored but were used to construct the responses of our hypothetical candidate.

Judgments of relevancy were situation oriented. The recruiter was placed in the context of the hypothetical selection situation and was confronted with a set of condidate's attitudes related to educational practices i.e. pupil discipline and a set of attitudes related to international attitudes i.e. trade agreements. In that context the attitudes expressed in the Educational Scale were deemed job relevant and those of the WS were deemed job irrelevant.

In a larger context we realize that both sets are related to the educational process. But even in the larger context we feel the attitudes expressed in the ES are more relevant to the job. It becomes, in essence, a question of degree of

relevance rather than of whether they are relevant or not.

Dependent Measures

The dependent variables in this study were the recruiter's expressed attraction to the candidate, his judgment of the candidate's qualifications for the vacancy and the recruiter's decision regarding certainty of hiring the candidate. The Interpersonal Judgment Scale (IJS) (Byrne 1961) was used as a measure of attraction and the Candidate Evaluation Form was used to measure the recruiter judgment of qualifications and certainty of hiring.

The IJS contains two frequently asked sociometric questions which form the basis of the attraction dimension. The items are concerned with personal feelings about the candidate and the candidate's desirability as a work partner.

The researcher who developed the IJS reported a split half reliability of .85 for the attraction measure (Byrne and Nelson 1965). The attraction score is obtained by adding the two scores which yields a total score ranging from 2 to 14. The higher score indicates high attraction to the candidate.

The Candidate Evaluation Form (CEF) contained ten items dealing with judgments about certain candidate attributes and their relationship to the vacancy. The attributes included teaching experiences, undergraduate work, other related experience and general qualifications of the candidate. One final item dealt with the recruiter's certainty of hiring the candidate.

The items were Likert-type items that were developed from candidate information which had been prepared from an analysis of placement forms, job descriptions, and expressed information preferences of recruiters (Merritt 1970). Two items of this scale were used to obtain scores representing judgments of candidate qualifications and certainty of hiring. The scores ranged from 1 to 7 with the higher score indicating greater qualifications or greater certainty of hiring.

Data Gathering Procedures

The participants in this study were asked to complete a questionnaire and an

information form (the ES and WS). Relevant attitudes were represented by responses to WS questions. The questions from both scales were conbined into one document. When these forms were received by the researchers a bogus attitude information form was prepared from a recruiter's original forms. When the bogus attitude forms of the hypothetical candidate were completed they were returned to that participant (except for the Control group) along with standard placement information about the candidate.

A preplanned response pattern was used to prepare the bogus information forms from the participant's original. The recruiters were randomly selected to receive candidate attitude forms that placed them in one of the following groups.

1. Control (C)	no attitude information
2. Similarity (S)	similar relevant attitudes and similar irrelevant attitudes
3. Dissimilar (D)	dissimilar relevant attitudes and dissimilar irrelevant attidudes
4. Similar Relevant (SRDI) Dissimilar Irrelevant	Similar relevant attitudes dissimilar irrelevant attitudes
5. Dissimilar Relevant (DRSI) Similar Irrelevant	Dissimilar relevant attitudes similar irrelevant attitudes

Other candidate information given to all participants included teaching experience, courses taken, grades earned, references, student teaching experience, and related work experience. This additional information about the candidate was identical for all participants. Thus, the only difference in the hypothetical candidate was in the attitude information. The attitude information was prepared so that the groups represented a continuum (See fig. 2).

The participants received the information about the hypothetical candidate one week after they had completed their forms. They were told that they had completed the forms in order to sensitize them to information forms that were being used in teacher selection. They were then given a role assignment as a principal seeking a fifth grade teacher. Each participant read his instructions, and reviewed

ATTITUDES

All Dissimilar	Dissimilar Relevant Similar Irrelevant	Control: No Information	Similar Relevant Dissimilar Irrelevant	All Similar

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Very Unfavorable	Unfavorable	Neutral	Favorable	Very Favorable

DECISIONS

Figure 2: Continuum of attitude conditions with related recruiter decisions suggested by ABX system. Similar attitudes favor positive outcomes while the other extreme (dissimilar) favor negative selection process outcomes.

a hypothetical candidate's folder. The candidate was purported to be real. The participants were asked to complete the IJS and CEF after they reviewed the pertinent information.

Operational Hypotheses

The operational hypotheses related to each general hypothesis are listed below:

Hypotheses Related to Qualification Variable

H_2 There is a relationship between judgments of candidate qualifications by recruiters and attitude congruency between candidates and recruiters.

$H_{2.1}$ There will be a difference in the qualification ratings of teacher candidates by recruiters in group C and group DRSI.

$H_{2.2}$ There will be a difference between the qualification ratings of teacher candidates by recruiters in group C and group SRDI.

$H_{2.3}$ Group C recruiters will rate the teacher candidates' qualifications higher than group D recruiters.

$H_{2.4}$ Group S recruiters will rate the teacher candidates' qualifications higher than recruiters in each of the other groups.

$H_{2.5}$ Group SRDI recruiters will rate the teacher candidates' qualifications higher than recruiters in group D or recruiters in group DRSI.

$H_{2.6}$ Group DRSI recruiters will rate the teacher candidates' qualifications higher than recruiters in group D.

Hypotheses Related to Attraction Variable

H_3 There is a relationship between recruiter attraction to candidates and attitude congruency between candidates and recruiters.

$H_{3.1}$ There will be a difference in the attraction ratings of teacher candidates by recruiters in group C and group DRSI.

$H_{3.2}$ There will be a difference between the attraction ratings of teacher candidates by recruiters in group C and group SRDI.

$H_{3.3}$ Group C recruiters will rate the teacher candidates higher in attraction than group D recruiters.

$H_{3.4}$ Group S recruiters will rate the teacher candidates higher in attraction than recruiters in each of the other groups.

$H_{3.5}$ Group SRDI recruiters will rate the teacher candidates higher in attraction than recruiters in group D or recruiters in group DRSI.

$H_{3.6}$ Group DRSI recruiters will rate the teacher candidate higher in attraction than recruiters in group D.

Hypotheses Related to Hiring Variable

H_4 There is a relationship between hiring certainty of candidates expressed by recruiters and attitude congruency between candidates and recruiters.

$H_{4.1}$ There will be a difference in the certainty of hiring ratings of teacher candidates by recruiters in group C and group DRSI.

$H_{4.2}$ There will be a difference between the certainty of hiring ratings of teacher candidates by recruiters in group C and group SRDI.

$H_{4.3}$ Group C recruiters will rate the teacher candidates higher in certainty of hiring than group D recruiters.

$H_{4.4}$ Group S recruiters will rate the teacher candidates higher in certainty of hiring than recruiters in each of the other groups.

$H_{4.5}$ Group SRDI recruiters will rate the teacher candidates higher in certainty of hiring than recruiters in group D or recruiters in group DRSI.

$H_{4.6}$ Group DRSI recruiters will rate the teacher candidate higher in certainty of hiring than recruiters in group D.

Results - Discussion

We hypothesized that there would be a relationship among the attraction ratings qualification judgments and hiring decision. A step wise multiple regression analysis was computed to ascertain this relationship. The results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Correlation Indicies - Attraction, Qualification

and Hiring Decision Scores

Rating Variable	All Groups
Qualification and Attraction	.49
Qualification and Hiring	.70
Attraction and Hiring	.64

Positive relationships between judgments of qualifications and hiring decisions are shown in Table 1. This is confirmation of the common sense notion but we had expected it to be stronger. The relationship between attraction ratings and hiring

decisions are positive also but are a low .64. We felt that this relationship would also be atronger. Finally, the relationship between attraction ratings and ratings of the candidate's qualifications is a very low positive one(.49).

The data suggest that the three variables may not be considered as one generalized attraction factor. However, we found partial support for our hypothesis in the relationships between qualifications and hiring decisions and also between interpersonal attraction and hiring decisions.

A one way analysis of variance was computed for each dependent variable. The results of the analysis of the qualification variable are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Analysis of Variance of Qualification Judgments

	SS	DF	MS	F
Qualifi-cations	22.328	4	5.582	4.260*
Error	94.347	72	1.310	
Total	116.676	76		

*p .01

The data show that the F ratio was significant at the .01 level and supports hypothesis two. This analysis indicates that there is a significant difference in the ratings of the candidate's job qualifications among the different attitude groups. Hypothesis two therefore received support. An a priori decision was made to use the conservative post hoc Tuckey HSD test to make pairwise comparisons among the means. The result of the analysis of the qualification means are shown in Table 3. The HSD value at the .01 level is 1.4.

Table 3

Comparison of Qualification Means

		S	DRSI	SRDI	C	D
Similarity	x = 4.2		1.1	1.2	1.3	1.6*
DRSI	x = 3.1			.1	.2	.5
SRDI	x = 3.0				.1	.4
Control	x = 2.9					.3
Dissimilar	x = 2.6					

*p .01

The only significant difference was between the means of the Similar group and the Dissimilar group. The Similar group means alone approached significance at the .01 level when compared to all other groups. These data displayed in Table 3 partially support hypotheses 2.4. The recruiters in the Similarity group rated the qualifications of the candidate significantly higher than the recruiters in the Dissimilar group even though the written qualifications were identical. No significant differences were found between the SRDI and DRSI recruiters.

The results of the analysis of the attraction variable are displayed in Table 4. The results of the analysis of variance are significant at the .01 level and support hypothesis three.

Table 4

Analysis of Variance Attraction Judgments

	SS	DF	MS	F
Attraction	200.926	4	50.231	13.703*
Error	263.934	72	3.666	
Total	464.859	76		

*p .01

The results of the comparison of attraction variable are displayed in Table 5. The mean of the Similarity group were significantly different from the other groups.

Table 5

Comparison of Attraction Means

		S	C	SRDI	DRSI	D
Similarity	x = 11.2		2.8*	2.5*	4.1*	4.6*
Control	x = 8.4			.1	1.3	1.8
SRDI	x = 8.3				1.2	1.7
DRSI	x = 7.1					.5
Dissimilar	x = 6.6					

*p .01

The HSD at the .01 level is 2.25 No significant differences were found between the SRDI and DRSI recruiters.

The results of the analysis of variance computed for the hiring decision are presented in Table 6. The results are significant at the .01 level. These findings support hypothesis four.

Table 6

Analysis of Variance Hiring Decision

	SS	DF	MS	F
Hiring	72.712	4	18.178	9.875*
Error	132.535	72	1.841	
Total	205.247	76		

*p .01

The results of a comparison of the hiring decision means are displayed in Table 7. The HSD value of the .01 level is 1.64.

Table 7

Comparison of Hiring Decision Means

		S	SRDI	C	D	DRSI
Similarity	x = 4.9		1.8*	1.9*	2.3*	2.7*
SRDI	x = 3.1			.1	.5	.9
C	x = 3.0				.4	.8
D	x = 2.6					.4
DRSI	x = 2.2					

*p .01

Once again the Similarity group mean was significantly different from all other groups. No significant differences between the means of the SRDI and DRSI recruiters were found.

Conclusions - Implications

The major conclusions of this exploratory study are as follows:

1. Both qualification ratings and interpersonal attraction ratings are related certainty of hiring decisions. Recruiters who rate the qualifications of the candidate high or recruiters who are attracted to the candidate to a high degree are more certain of hiring the candidate. It apparently pays to have excellent job qualifications or to be well liked by the recruiters. These common sense notions are supported by our study. How candidates get their qualifications to be perceived as "excellent" or how candidates get the recruiter to like him are different matters to be dealt with later.
2. Qualification and attraction ratings may be independent variables. Our data suggest that judgments of qualification may not be considered as part of generalized attraction. Our results suggest that well-liked individuals may be judged to have low qualifications and highly qualified candidates may also be less liked. Our earlier unpublished efforts yielded different results. In the earlier studies both variables were related and

varied together. Further research is needed.

3. A high degree of attitude similarity or dissimilarity between candidate and recruiter does affect the recruiter's judgment of candidate qualification, attraction and the certainty of hiring the candidate. Judgments of candidate qualifications are affected least by the high degree of attitude congruence. It pays to know your recruiter, especially his beliefs. If a candidate achieves a high degree of attitude congruence with the recruiter during the interview it enhances his chances of being hired. This process is positive when homogeneity of workers is important. If hetrogenity is sought then efforts to reduce the effect of attitude congruence should be undertaken.
4. The attitudes agreed upon by the candidate and recruiter need not be job relevant in order to influence the recruiter's judgment. This conclusion taken with the third conclusion is disturbing. In essence it means that the idiosyncratic attitudes of the recruiter may be the basis for selection or rejection of candidates. Cronbach and Gleser (1965) provide an excellent description of the difference between institutional values and personal values. They also present an account of how these values should affect the selection decision. Unfortunately, as the authors point out, the completely rational man is a myth and personal values can and do intervene. Sometimes this intervention is laudable but sometimes it is wasteful and nonproductive. Perhaps interview schedules with key attitude questions might be prepared to account for important company attitudes. The results from the key interview questions could be combined with application form data in order to yield a more objective decision.

Teachers candidates should also be aware of the influence of attitudes congruence in the selection process. It may also follow that candidates may be falsely attracted to a position based on idiosyncratic attitude congruence. Teacher

preparation programs might consider using selection simulation to explore the forces that are at work in the teacher selection process.

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